

AN OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT  
FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION

REPORT # 1

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## FORWARD

Since 1982, Helen Keller International along with several other technical assistance and donor agencies has been working with the Caribbean Council for the Blind (CCB) on the development of a comprehensive program to provide rehabilitation to blind and visually impaired persons in its twenty-two (22) nations and territories. A major thrust of these efforts has been the linkage of community-based rehabilitation with income generating opportunities for blind and visually impaired persons throughout the Region.

During the period June through October, 1984 HKI and CCB carried out a "Socio/Economic Analysis of Income Generating Employment Opportunities" in five (5) representative countries in the Region. While the primary emphasis of this study was village level entrepreneurial opportunity, both open and sheltered employment opportunities were also examined. The team which carried out that study felt strongly that the sheltered employment facilities for blind and visually impaired persons should be examined in greater depth. It appeared that these facilities, which were absorbing the greatest percentage of the meager resources devoted to rehabilitation in the Region, were providing only very modest benefits to an extremely limited number of blind and visually impaired persons. Further, the team felt that with proper analysis, training and the introduction of new product lines and a more business oriented philosophy, some of these facilities might become viable business ventures.

During the period June through August, 1985 a Cornell University student participating in the Cornell Tradition Program worked for HKI and CCB thanks to the generous support of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. For a twelve-week period, Douglas Rutzen carried out an operational analysis on three sheltered employment facilities for the blind in Antigua, Barbados and Guyana. The purpose of these studies was to analyze current operating policies and practices and to make specific recommendations regarding changes that would allow these facilities to provide satisfying and economically rewarding job opportunities for limited numbers of blind and visually impaired persons.

As the reader will quickly recognize, the situation in these facilities today is complex and difficult to deal with. However, there are real opportunities that can be developed, and with proper training...particularly in the area of management and small-scale business practices, these facilities could be transformed into economically viable units providing real and financially remunerative work for those individuals whom they employ.

We are pleased to share these findings with you.

Lawrence F. Campbell  
Director  
Education and Rehabilitation  
Helen Keller International

W. Aubrey Webson  
Executive Director  
Caribbean Council for the Blind



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- Appendix A: List of Persons Interviewed
- Appendix B: Complete List of Suggested Repairs and Physical Improvements
- Appendix C: List of Sample Duties and Functions Corresponding with Positions
- Appendix D: Treasurer's Comments and Workshop's Financial Statements
- Appendix E: BIMAP Information



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the summer of 1985, Douglas Rutzen, Cornell University Intern for Helen Keller International and the Caribbean Council for the Blind, completed an operational analysis on the Antigua Industrial Workshop for the Blind. The analysis was sponsored by the following organizations:

Edna McConnell Clark Foundation  
The Cornell Tradition/Cornell University  
Antigua Society for the Blind  
Caribbean Council for the Blind  
Helen Keller International, Incorporated

The purpose of the analysis was to define and assess the status of the workshop and to propose changes to make it a more viable economic unit.

There are several factors which are barriers to this goal. First, the workforce is elderly and relatively unskilled; second, management lacks knowledge of business principles; and third, the Society is operating at a loss and has little money available to finance a business venture. On the other hand, the workshop is in a prime location, staff members are dedicated, and the Society has been offered various forms of assistance from the government and outside organizations.

After speaking with Society members, local business people, and government officials, several ventures were proposed. For the less productive workers, the possibility of producing decorative bags of sand was explored. These are easy and inexpensive to produce and could be sold to tourist shops or could be used as a promotion by a large company operating in Antigua.

The venture with the greatest chance of success is utility candles. The market is nearly eighty thousand (80,000). A natural expansion would be decorative and scented candles, and this possibility is explored. Additionally, potential exists in the areas of packing, labeling, and electronic component assembly.

Any or all of these ventures could fulfill the Society's goal to implement income generating activities and to gain the benefits associated with them.



## PREFACE

1. The Industrial Workshop for the Blind in Antigua, Barbados and Guyana under the auspices of the Caribbean Council for the Blind, are now entering their fourth decade. Throughout their history, the workshops provided a location for socialization, education, and work. In turn, community awareness of blind and visually impaired persons has increased while certain stigmas have eroded. To further integrate their clients into the mainstream, as well as for financial reasons, the Societies have decided to promote the business component of the workshop while deemphasizing the traditional focus on shelter.
2. To assist with this reorientation toward business, the Caribbean Council for the Blind suggested an operational analysis on the workshops. The extent of this analysis was determined exclusively by the member Society, as this Caribbean Council for the Blind wished to maintain the organizational integrity of the individual Societies.
3. This report is specific to the Antigua Society for the Blind.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Caribbean Council for the Blind and Helen Keller International wish to record appreciation to the following organizations/persons who have made this analysis possible:

- Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
- The Cornell Tradition, Cornell University
- The Antigua and Barbada Society for the Blind through its President, Mr. Hughes
- The people and Government of Antigua

## Abbreviations and Definitions

- A.S.B.        - Antigua and Barbada Society for the Blind
- C.C.B.        - Caribbean Council for the Blind
- Client        - Person who regularly comes to the workshop and participates in social and/or work activities.
- Executive    - The governing body of the Society, specifically refers to the Society's officers.
- R.F.O.        - Rehabilitation Field Officer



## SECTION I: INPUT ANALYSIS

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A) GENERAL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ANALYSIS

- 1) The main objectives of the operational analysis is to define and assess the present status of the Industrial Workshop for the Blind in Antigua and to propose changes to make the workshop a viable economic unit. Specific objectives include:
  - a) the assessment of the workshop's current capital, labor, market, and organizational structure.
  - b) the identification and assessment of products that would increase income while serving the needs of current clients.

#### B) METHODOLOGY

- 1) In 1984, the Caribbean Council for the Blind with support and technical assistance from Helen Keller International sponsored socio-economic studies of general member societies. While Antigua was not specifically studied, this analysis draws on general conclusions mentioned in the studies.
- 2) The analysis was conducted and the report was written by Douglas Rutzen - Cornell University/Class of 1987. The consultant in association with the Antigua Society for the Blind, met and held discussions with representatives of:
  - . Ministries of Government
  - . Private and Public Sector Organizations
  - . Local businesses
- 3) Recommendations for future production attempt to encompass possibility as well as profitability. Proposed ventures are analyzed within the context of clients' present and realistically trainable skills. At this point in time, only moderate training is viewed as realistic.



- 4) Since a longer range solution is sought, short run, "get-rich-quick" schemes, are not assessed.
- 5) In summary, the analysis examined and/or identified:
  - a) Current operations and products of the workshop
  - b) Recommendations to improve the operations and products of the workshop
  - c) Specific production information and plans for proposed products
  - d) Benefits of proposed changes.

### C) LIMITATIONS

The consultant's work was slightly impeded by the irregular attendance of ASB members at executive meetings and the inaccessibility of certain officers. The brevity of the consultant's stay, of course, limited the extent of the analysis and recommendations.

## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### A. CLIENT HISTORY

Eleven (11) clients utilize the workshop's facilities. Ten (10) are considered workshop employees while one operates independently of the workshop's control. The current clients joined the workshop between its inception, in 1951, and 1974. Most of the clients who joined between 1964 and 1974 were graduated from the School for the Blind in Trinidad, where their attendance was sponsored by the Society and the Government. Eight (8) clients are totally blind, one (1) has light perception, one (1) has extremely limited functional vision, and one (1) is a deaf mute individual. Of those with no vision, most went blind later in life and had held employment in areas such as agriculture, domestic service, and carpentry. When the clients entered the workshop, they were queued into handicrafts, often ignoring prior work skills. Now due to society's expectations and clients' advanced age, most seem to possess no transferable work skills other than handicrafts. Plans for a future venture must recognize this. The current inventory of



products, excluding privately owned goods, is forty-seven (47) blue mats, one (1) medium size rug, and several plant holders. The Executive is responsible for procuring raw materials, and its irregular supply limits production.

Privately owned goods, for which the individuals purchase the raw materials, include purses, placemats, and rope mats. Currently, the workshop has no control over the price, quality, or quantity of these products.

#### B) DOLLAR QUOTATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated all dollar amounts are quoted in Eastern Caribbean currency. (The exchange rate is fixed at: US\$1 = ECC \$2.70.)

### III. PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

The workshops location and size are tremendous assets. The building is situated close to the market in the center of St. Johns, and it is approximately sixty-four (64) feet by thirty-eight (38) feet. These assets allow the Society to consider various types of ventures. A retail operation would benefit from the prime location, while a wholesale or manufacturing operation would benefit from its large size.

The workshop owns a wide assortment of furniture, equipment, appliances, and tools. Furniture includes tables, kitchen cabinets, and glass cases, but most are used inefficiently. For example, one (1) large table in the center of the room is used to store waste materials and old papers. Other furniture is too dirty to use. Equipment, appliances, and tools consist of a sewing machine, oven, refrigerator, and handicraft tools. The sewing machine, oven, and many tools have not been used for years. To increase efficiency and revenue, the building and its contents should be cleaned thoroughly and regularly. Considering the needs of the future business venture, unneeded furniture, equipment, appliances and tools should be removed or sold. Furthermore, additional necessary equipment should be produced or purchased. The Society should avoid large expenditures, while concentrating on less expensive equipment; a fire extinguisher and a secure bar to help the weavers keep rope taut are good examples.



As for repairs and changes to the building and surroundings, the Implementation Committee, which was selected at a June Board Meeting, should consult the "Complete List of Suggested Repairs and Physical Improvements", Appendix B, to develop priorities.

#### IV. ADDITIONAL USES OF THE BUILDING

Currently, only one-third to one-half of the building is used in any reasonably efficient manner. If after implementing changes extra space remains, the Implementation Committee should consult a real estate agent about leasing out a section of the building "as is". A small business, a business that needs storage, or even a present client who wishes to independently continue with the current product line are prospective leases. Leasing would provide several advantages. First, revenue would be significantly increased. For example, a real estate agent with whom the consultant spoke believes the Society could charge between \$1.50 and \$2.50 per square foot. In fact, she has a client interested in renting out one-half of the building, "as is," for \$1.75 per square foot, approximately \$25,750 per annum. For perspective, this sum nearly equals the total projected amount all clients will receive this year. It is greater than the total payment received by all clients in fiscal year 1983-1984. This money would allow the Society to provide more complete services which could be targeted for outreach programs, social activities, machinery, building upkeep, administrative salaries, or any other area the Executive determined appropriate.

There may be some resentment by clients about another business entering the facility. While this should not control the decision on whether to lease, it should be recognized. If the decision to lease is made, the Society should immediately inform the clients, and explain to them the benefits to the Society of such a decision.

Another option for extra space is to use it as the workshop's training center. The benefit is that the RFO and other trainers would have separate and potentially large center. However, the training center may fit comfortably into the workshop, even if a section of the building is leased. However, the Society should not, if possible, make the workshop the center for the rehabilitation and counseling aspects of the RFO's job.



This is important because the Society's goal is to transform the workshop from a center of "shelter" to a viable business.

V. CLIENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMMUNITY OF ANTIGUAN  
VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND BLIND PEOPLE AND THE WORKSHOP

The clients seem to consider themselves the only blind and visually impaired in Antigua worthy of assistance. Certainly they do not identify with those outside the workshop. They also believe the workshop need only serve the needs of present clients, and it should not be overly concerned with the needs of potential clients.

This attitude may hinder effective integration of additional workers. This opposition should not be tolerated; the Society should serve the community of blind and visually impaired people, not only the eleven (11) present clients. There are several hundred functionally blind people in Antigua, and they may hold the key for the venture's future success.

To minimize the effects of this attitude, the Society should take a firm stand and explain to present clients the goal of serving the community of blind and visually impaired people. In addition, productive workers should be reassured that their positions will not be jeopardized. This security should ease resistance.

VI. CLIENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR WORK

During private interviews, nearly all clients expressed boredom and frustration with current production. Boredom seems to have emerged after working years on the same sort of products. Since products remain unsold, and workers receive little or no money for production frustration has developed.

This boredom and frustration has led to a pessimistic outlook on changes, particularly changes of product. Clients uniformly call for change but "want to try something new," with the option of abandoning the venture if all does not work out as planned. Furthermore, a very strong effort was made to include workers on the Implementation Committee. After numerous excuses and the



resignation of one (1) client one (1) worker representative joined. The consultant believes this lack of participation is the end result of their boredom and frustration.

A pessimistic atmosphere could hinder long-range changes. At any negative sight, which often appear in sound but new business ventures, it is possible that the workers will immediately give up on the product. The pessimism may then become a self-fulfilling prophecy. To avoid this:

- 1) the workers should be involved early in the decision-making process,
- 2) the workers should know what to expect from the business venture,
- 3) the professional staff should be dedicated to motivating workers, and
- 4) most importantly, a good product must not be abandoned because of a discontented labor force.

The Society must either motivate the labor force or, if need be, involve new workers.

## VII. QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Observations indicate that productivity is extremely low. Inventories are low considering the number of years spent in production and the number of products sold. For example, four (4) workers produce workshop-owned mats. They have been producing for years and few have been sold. However, only forty-seven (47) workshop-owned mats are in stock. This low productivity may be due to frustration, boredom, and/or shortages of raw materials. Alternatively, it may be due to a lack of natural skill, coupled with poor training. The supervisor and the RFO must identify then eliminate the major causes of this problem. Otherwise, low production levels and low profits may plague a future venture.

Quality, particularly in regard to uniformity, is low. Sizes vary among items sold in sets. For example, it was nearly impossible to find two plates which are close in size. While uniformity may be not a high priority for certain speciality items, it is absolutely necessary from



mass-produced goods. In addition, some products are poorly constructed and therefore unsaleable. The supervisor should emphasize quality and uniformity as well as dealing with problems where they exist.

#### VIII. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Since there is little incentive to work, many clients engage in informal social activities. At present, these do not interfere with production because there is often no work to be done. However, after a business orientation is introduced, it is imperative that work activities be separated from social activities. An effective method would be to schedule social activities outside work hours or in a separate location. Also, it should be the goal of these activities to involve other community members, sighted and non-sighted. This would help breakdown some stereotypes and facilitate integration into the community.

A Social Development Committee has been formed, and it will plan activities. While the clients are the best sources of ideas, the consultant would suggest activities such as card games, dominoes, and going to special carnival events.

#### IX. COMPENSATION

Compensation can take two forms: A subsidy from the Ministry of Education or a commission from sales. The subsidy is only available for "workshop employees," those ten (10) who have access to workshop-owned raw materials. Their weekly subsidies range from EC\$46 to EC\$70, and the total weekly budget for these payments is EC\$582. According to the President of the Society, the subsidy level is based on seniority, and the subsidy itself is a payment simply for coming regularly to the workshop. The consultant suggests the Implementation Committee carefully examine the basis for the subsidy and should, for the time being, link it somewhat to productivity.

The second type of payment, the commission, is so rare as to be negligible in figuring compensation. From reviewing the receipt book, the consultant noticed that most clients have not received a commission in months, and some have not received a commission in a year.



For analysis, these two forms of payment should be considered separately, especially since the government subsidy is not specifically targeted for worker's compensation. In fact, a successful business venture could free up a portion of this subsidy for financing new projects and programs. After separating this form of compensation, it becomes clear that income generated from work is near zero.

#### **X. MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

The workshop does almost no formal marketing or advertising. Some products are actually hidden from view or stacked underneath other items. Therefore, an interested customer must know to ask for a specific item or search for it. This certainly limits sales.

To attract customers, the business must conveniently and appropriately display its merchandise. The four (4) large picture windows are a great asset but before there are used, one (1) window must be repaired, and an effort to reduce glare should be made. Due to glare, it is almost impossible to identify products from their surroundings. An awning or different color background may help.

When displaying items, it would be best to show them as they appear in their natural state and in sets of similar items. For example, a good kitchen display would include some placemats, plates, bread baskets, and spice baskets on a table. This approach encourages a consumer to buy sets rather than individual items.

To further attract customers, the building and its surroundings must be well-kept. As mentioned above, specific recommendations are included in Appendix B.

Furthermore, someone must promote and sell the products. It appears that no one is currently responsible for sales. The consultant observed several potential customers entering, browsing, then leaving without ever being offered assistance. Without courteous help, sales and profits will be lost.

There is no formal advertising of products. At this point, inexpensive, highly visible advertising is best. For example, free service announcements, as well as posters and signs on the street should be fully utilized. The



Implementation Committee should also consider print, radio and television advertising. Local television advertising is probably inefficient due to the popularity of American cable. However, the other forms may be effective to publicize special sales or promotions.

#### XI. BUILDING NAME

Since the Society wishes to reorient from shelter to business, the name of the building should be changed from the "Industrial Workshop for the Blind" to exclude the word "blind." There are three major reasons for this.

1. In the past, sales might have been increased by appealing to people's sympathy; a practice that should be discouraged through public education programs. However, charity is often linked to the economy. Now under poor economic conditions, people are less likely to be charitable. This is shown in the decrease in workshop sales in the past few years.
2. A goal of the Society is to integrate the blind into the Antiguan community. By having the word "blind" in the name and on the sign, the Society emphasizes the disability rather than emphasizing the products and services.
3. Since many businesses and consumers have stereotypes about the ability of the blind, they are hesitant to deal with or buy from the workshop. This reluctance was noticed on several occasions.

A good name is J.O.B. Industries, where J.O.B. stands for Job Opportunities for the Blind. This name would encompass all the workshops' productive activities and would lend an air of professionalism to the business. Whatever the choice or name, the sign should be repainted immediately.

Changing the name and sign would have many desirable effects. Business dealings would be facilitated and it would be a first step toward integrating clients into the community.

#### XII. PRICING

Prices are determined by the supervisor, if it is a workshop product, or the client, if it is a private



product. Prices for similar goods and past experience form the decision. However, this approach ignores factors such as a quality, marketing, and demand for the product. Personal observation suggests this has led to high prices, and therefore low sales and stockpiled products.

To increase revenue, and at the same time reduce inventory, the workshop should lower the prices on nearly all its products. From general analysis, the consultant suggests prices should be reduced by twenty (20) to fifty (50) percent. Specifically for mats, the consultant suggests a one-third (1/3) reduction. This reduction should sufficiently increase sales as to benefit both the workshop and client.

Future prices must reflect factors such as cost, demand and competition for particular products. Specific pricing is discussed in appropriate sections.

### XIII. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Currently the Society employs one (1) secretary, one (1) Rehabilitation Field Officer, and one (1) supervisor. Since the secretary was hired in the midst of the consultant's stay, he could not evaluate the position with regard to job responsibilities and expectations. This should be done immediately.

The supervisor plays a passive role in relation to the business requirements of the workshop. Her role appears to be to tend to the personal needs of the clients. This seems to include buying groceries and running errands. As for the "business" of the workshop, she is responsible for paying the weekly subsidy and commissions, if there are any.

In regard to hierarchy, it is clear that the secretary is responsible to the supervisor. Beyond this level the hierarchy is confused. The role of the clients is particularly troublesome. The clients seem completely independent of the workshop as an organization. They work and produce when and what they wish and, at times, they seem to direct the operation. Most clients buy their own raw materials. At the same time, all use the building, and some use equipment. Individuals have even produced mats which directly compete with the workshop's mats. This is a



waste of resources. Furthermore, production control is completely lost and the clients have come to believe that they control the operation.

This attitude has led to many of the problems presently facing the workshop. All businesses need central planning for efficient use of raw materials, marketing and advertising resources, and to motivate workers. Therefore, the Implementation Committee should try to strengthen central planning.

#### XIV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive, with its numerous committees, is a great asset to the workshop. In many ways, it has the organization the workshop lacks. The Committees has great potential and they could brighten the future of many blind and visually impaired people. As the consultant observed in meetings with members, this potential can be quickly converted into energy and creativity. Specifically, the consultant looks to the Implementation Committee to carefully review the recommendations then efficiently implement changes.

#### XV. PROPOSED CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To increase the efficiency of the business, specific responsibilities should be assigned to specific people. Currently, no one person is responsible for raw material procurement; it is left to the Executive. This seems to have contributed to shortages of materials and therefore low inventories. It would be best if one person or a small committee were responsible for specific operations such as raw materials procurement, sales, and advertising.

To facilitate this, a detailed job description should be given to paid staff members, preferably at the time of hiring. Specific duties and expectations should be discussed. Instead of writing every description, the consultant has included as Appendix C a list of necessary tasks and functions as well as suggested positions to be responsible for each. A job description then could be easily formed. A business orientation would be promoted and conflicts from misunderstandings would be reduced.



To get maximum benefit from the job descriptions, they should be developed prior to advertising the opening. This would allow the Executive to determine if the position is truly necessary and to hire the most qualified candidate.

The job description would be more relevant if it is regularly reviewed and, if necessary, revised. Furthermore, formal performance evaluations should be conducted after the initial month of work and at least every eight months thereafter. These evaluations would act as a forum to praise the employee, discuss problems, and suggest areas for improvement.

Other organizational changes are already in the process. The RFO should complete his training in mid-August. Then he could assist with mobility training, daily living skills, identification of potential employees, the adaptation of the worksite, the development of vocational assessment tests, and the training of workers. A coordinator also should be hired by mid-September. With regard to the workshop duties, the Coordinator will develop projects and programs, make adjustments in the production process, develop the budget, while generally overseeing all activities. The abilities and dedication of these two people, as well as the supervisor, will to a large part determine the success of the business. The RFO seems genuinely dedicated and skilled. The Executive should check that all positions are filled with equally qualified people.

#### XVI. MANAGEMENT TRAINING

A meeting was held with Mr. Michael Small who works with BIMAP's (Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity) USAID program. Under this program, representatives of BIMAP regularly work with management, often one (1) week per month, consulting on all aspects of the business. Particularly interesting is that they would assist in implementing business ventures. The BIMAP informational brochures are described in Appendix E.

The program is not yet in effect in Antigua, but all signs indicate that it will be in the very near future. The program runs until at least September 1987. (If funding is renewed it will run later.) The cost of this program



usually is \$250, however, Mr. Small believes this amount can be waived or significantly reduced if the workshop chose to join.

It would be a great benefit to take full advantage of BIMAP's services. The first step would be for the Implementation Committee to contact Mr. Small at the central office in Barbados.

#### XVII. ACCOUNTING

A meeting was held with Mr. Benjamin, Treasurer of the CCB, to review the March 1985 Balance Sheet and Income Statement. A copy of each as well as the Treasurer's comments are included as Appendix D. It was agreed that these financial statements were incomplete. For example, no records of sales, commissions paid, or costs of raw materials are included. Furthermore, the accounts of the Society and the workshop are meshed into one statement. This is why the grant for RFO's salary appears as an asset for the workshop.

To apply for funding and to evaluate the efficiency of future operations, an accountant must complete these statements. Mr. Benjamin volunteered to complete monthly statements. All he will need are the receipt book, deposit book, and check book. It should be the responsibility of the secretary to deliver these books to Mr. Benjamin at the end of each month. In addition, Mr. Benjamin is willing to meet with the secretary and supervisor to review procedures on completing these books. This should be implemented immediately.



## SECTION II: PRODUCT ANALYSIS

### I. PROFIT FROM CURRENT PRODUCT LINE

The most pervasive fact in the product analysis is that the present products, particularly the mats, are not selling. As discussed above, the consultant believes the main cause for this is a general lack of marketing coupled with high price. Even if the mats and other products could be sold, with increased marketing the present products are too labor intensive and the profits are too low for production to continue. For example, workers estimated that a mat takes four days to complete. An average mat sells for \$20 and the client gets one-half of that. So even if every mat could be sold, these clients would only earn \$12.50 extra per week. And, of course, the assumptions used to derive this figure are extreme.

### II. CURRENT PRODUCT LINE AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PRODUCT LINE

It is absolutely necessary that the business focus its efforts. This is true in terms of both labor and products. All workers must contribute to the workshop. There cannot be "freeloaders" or others who use the business' facilities without contributing to it.

Furthermore, it would be unwise to deplete resources by producing a large variety of products. One (1) or two (2) products would be optimal. Therefore, all aspects of production and sales of current products should be discontinued. This should be a firm rule with no exceptions even for orders for work done at home.

### III. PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

Assessing the labor, capital, and management resources of the workshop and by considering the goals of the ASB, a list of minimal requirements for any new product has been developed:

1. The product must be labor intensive. Otherwise the Society would be unable to fulfill its goal of employing a large number of blind and visually impaired people.



2. The product must be profitable because the entire market is small, population less than 80,000. Minimally this implies that the product must have:

- a) rapid turnover, and/or
- b) the consumer uses more than a few, and/or
- c) there is a high profit per item.

These points are obvious but potential products must be assessed within this framework.

#### IV. FINANCING BUSINESS VENTURES

The information and recommendations may be used as a part of an application for funding a venture. Helen Keller International, Incorporated and the Caribbean Council for the Blind may assist with the application process. Upper level personnel in both organizations are optimistic that requests for funding have a high probability of acceptance. Prior to embarking on a venture, it is important that the Implementation Committee contact both organizations to get specifics.

#### V. GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE

A meeting was held with Mr. Armstrong, Coordinator for the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Energy and Foreign Affairs. He suggested the business apply for "approved status". This would allow continual duty-free importation of materials related to the production process. He also suggested the business apply for a one-time duty exemption on machinery and equipment. Though he could not guarantee these exemptions, he was optimistic that the business requests would be granted. Once the Society opts for a specific venture, it should immediately contact Mr. Armstrong for application procedures.

Of greater impact, Mr. Armstrong assured the consultant that if the following conditions were satisfied, the business would receive "protection." This would formally prohibit foreign imports of the goods and, it is said, informally restrict domestic production.

To be considered, the business and the goods must:

- 1) generate employment
- 2) be of competitive quality



- 3) be competitively priced
- 4) be produced in sufficient quantity to meet demand

If the business increased foreign exchange, probability of acceptance should be even higher.

## VI. POTENTIAL PRODUCTS:

### DECORATIVE BAGS OF SAND

#### A. Introduction:

Tourism is the largest sector of Antigua's economy. In St. Johns, tourist and curio shops seem popular and profitable. At present, a large variety of products are marketed. As noted by an official at the Ministry of Tourism, one (1) product that is not marketed is Antiguan sand. It appears that there would be a demand for the product. There is no empirical evidence, however officials involved with tourism believe a large market exists. The basis for the conclusion is the successful marketing of sand on other Caribbean Islands and in the United States. They claim Antigua is the only Caribbean Island with a large tourist sector which does not market sand.

#### B. Design

The concept is to pack approximately one and one-half (1 1/2) cups of fine quality beach sand into a five (5) inch by five (5) inch plastic bag, which is colorfully decorated with the name and scenes of Antigua and Barbuda. It is probably best to use a rectangular design, though shaping it into a figure, like a man, sun, or even a toe or shoe may be saleable. I suggest an artist be consulted to design these particulars. Members of the Society know of an artist who they will ask to volunteer.

The ministry of Tourism said we may use any of their slogans. These include:

- Antigua - The Real Fantasy Island
- Antigua - Heart of the Caribbean
- Antigua - The Natural Place to Be
- Antigua - Where Land and Sea Make Beauty  
(Land could be changed to Sand)
- Antigua - Play Antigua



Other ideas were:

Front: Mom and Dad went to Antigua:

Back: And all I got was this lousy Bag of Sand.

#### Antigua's Original Gift

American Airlines (any airlines or a large tourist business)

Letting you enjoy the best of Antigua

Their popular publicity scenes include:

People  
Sailing  
Nightlife  
Pineapples  
Lawn Tennis

#### C. Materials

Initially the Society should process approximately:

- . 2-5 measuring cups (dependent on number of clients who wish to participate)
- . 2-5 bins for sand (dependent on number of clients who wish to participate)
- . 1000 5" x 5" decorated plastic bags.
- . 1 large clean barrel
- . 1500 cups of sand
- . 10 candles to seal bag

Considering waste, this should be enough materials to produce 500 bags of sand. The smallest order for bags is 1000 so approximately 500 bags as well as sand will have to be stored for the second production batch.

#### D. Production Process

The plastic bags must be imported. A volunteer from the Executive should transport the bags from the port to the workshop. The bags should be stored in a very clean area. The bags are very thin, so storage space should not be a



problem. A volunteer from the Executive should also bring the sand to the workshop. Of course, the sand should be stored in a dry space. Due to dust, the actual worksite should be separated from other production functions, especially if white candles are produced. The Secretary should be responsible for purchasing the other materials.

The specifics of the production process should be the responsibility of the supervisor and artistic consultant. However, I see the general process as follows:

Before clients arrive, the supervisor would put one (1) bin with sand and a cup, and a set of plastic bags on opposite sides of the workspace. The worker would be responsible to add approximately one and one-half (1 1/2) cups of sand before the bag is sealed using a candle or string. Then the bag would be decorated according to the plans of the consultant. This may include adding cloth or other material to make the product more attractive. The completed bag would be put directly in front of the worker from which the supervisor can periodically inspect and collect the bags. The number produced should be recorded, so the client is appropriately compensated. The bags should be stored in stacks of twenty (20) so when orders come in it will be easy to distribute them.

#### E. Costs of Production

The most attractive feature of this venture is its low cost. Adolph Veira, of Veira Plastics in St. Vincent, quoted the following prices:

1000 5"x8"* 120 gauge plastic bags (including transportation)	EC\$10
2 color printing on 1000 bags	<u>EC\$ 2</u>
Total for 1000 printed bags	EC\$12

\*5"x5" would be cheaper

The workshop should negotiate with the government to procure sand. Sand should be free.)

The Society should try to locate a volunteer to assist with the design. However, if one cannot be found, then a nominal fee should be paid.

The barrel, measuring cups and bins should be a minimal cost, certainly not exceeding \$100. Excluding fixed costs,



total costs for the production of 1000 decorated bags of sand should range between \$112 and \$250. These figures should be used as guidelines, and empirical evidence should be employed when it becomes available.

#### F. Additional Indirect Costs

There are obviously many additional costs, such as electricity, water, etc. Because of incomplete financial records, the consultant was unable to calculate these. However, the consultant believes these costs are low-relative to other ventures.

#### G. Pricing

Pricing in the tourist sector deserves special consideration. The consultant believes tourists are more apt to buy a souvenir if it is moderately priced rather than particularly inexpensive. One reason is that most souvenirs are given as gifts, and no one wants to give a "cheap" gift. Second, a higher price may mean to some people that there is something special about the product. This something special is particularly important when the product is common, like sand.

From estimates on "Direct Costs" and "Additional Costs," approximate total costs should not be more than \$.25 per bag. The following price schedule should be optimal:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Price</u>
1-10 bags	\$1.10
11-15 bags	.95
25-50 bags	.75
51-100 bags	.70
100 + bags	.60

This schedule will probably lead to a concentration in the 25-50 bag range.

#### H. Profits

Until the design is finalized, a specific level of profit cannot be determined. However this section gives some guidelines. Empirical evidence should be employed as soon as it becomes available.



Assuming that the majority of sales will be in 25-50 bag level, profits would be at least \$.50 per bag or \$500 for 1000 bags. The break-even sales level would be approximately 330 bags.

In terms of dividing up revenue, the workshop should retain revenue to cover costs (direct and estimated indirect) and pay the worker the remainder. In the example cited above, for each bag sold the workshop would keep \$.25 and the worker would receive \$.50.

### I. Marketing

First, the consultant recommends that the supervisor or a volunteer from the Executive approach major companies which operate in Antigua, like American Airlines or Red Stripe beer. The representatives of the workshop should meet with the marketing manager of the company and suggest they order the sand bags as a promotional scheme. The points to stress are that it would be inexpensive and would get into people's homes.

Second, this product should be marketed to tourist shops. Because of the lack of marketing skills and resources, it is best to sell to these shops instead of selling directly to consumers, even if revenue is decreased.

Due to low investment costs, availability of materials, and the ease of production, the workshop may quickly encounter competition from local entrepreneurs. To ensure a reasonable market, the workshop should employ the following strategies:

- 1) Immediately prior to the opening of the tourist season, the workshop should approach the tourist shops with the product. This way any competitor would have less time to begin production. (Again sales should be the responsibility of the supervisor and/or a volunteer from the Executive.)
- 2) The product should have some identifying feature or trademark. This would allow the workshop to keep sales, even if it encountered competition.



### J. Benefits of Production of Decorative Bags of Sand

There are two major benefits involved with the production of decorated bags of sand: first it allows for a reasonable profit on a new product with little capital investment. The profit is, in absolute terms, small. However, it provides for a quick sign of the potential of the business and should encourage the workers. More importantly, this product allows workers, who are not capable of rigorous work or who do not wish to work with other products, to remain in the workshop. In a sense this product is a "work and activity" project that is self-sufficient. Therefore, this product should be seriously considered.

### UTILITY CANDLES

Candles appear to have a great potential. All candles are imported from Jamaica and Dominica. No one in Antigua currently produces utility candles. Therefore, the business could apply for protection. Second, the market is relatively large. According to the manager at a large wholesale operation, Antigua imports approximately 79,000 utility candles at a market value of EC\$50,000. These are used primarily in homes and restaurants.

Two sizes are currently available on the market, 8"x3/4" and 11"x1" (cylindrical).

The production process appears to be quite simple. Unfortunately, information from VITA was delayed in transit so it was unavailable at the time of writing. Once this information becomes available, the Implementation Committee should fully investigate areas including marketing, raw materials procurement, capital, training, labor force required, actual design and projected costs and profits. From this investigation, the Implementation Committee should decide whether to implement the plans.

While the empirical evidence is not available, industry and government experts suggest that the venture would be extremely successful and profitable. The best estimate available is that the venture, (if it produces 79,000 candles,) the average unit cost would be between EC\$0.21 and EC\$0.41 while the suggested retail price for eight (8) 8" or four (4) 11" candles is EC\$3.80. Using these figures to estimate wholesale price, a profit of EC\$7,500 and EC\$16,500 is expected.



Due to the tremendous oil resources of Trinidad, the ASB should explore an agreement with the Trinidad Society for the Blind so it may more cheaply obtain the paraffin necessary for candle production.

A tremendous possibility for expansion exists with the Guyana market. Paul Bahadur, Marketing Manager of Geddes Grant, has offered to purchase one hundred thousand (100,000) 8"x3/4" candles per month at a price ranging from between sixty three (.63) cents EC to one dollar and one (1.01) cent EC per candle. The seemingly insurmountable obstacle is that of foreign exchange. Government officials say it is nearly impossible for Guyana Geddes Grant to obtain the foreign currency to purchase the candles.

One seemingly sound solution is to arrange a barter agreement between the ASB and the Guyana Society for the Blind. This would probably be better than a direct agreement between ASB and Geddes Grant because some duties and taxes could be waived. In any event, catering to the Guyana market should increase total profits by many times.

#### DECORATIVE AND SCENTED CANDLES

Once the demand for utility candles is met, the Implementation Committee should consider expanding into decorative and scented candles. While it does not appear to require raw materials much more expensive than those used for utility candles, their retail price are four (4) to five (5) times the cost of a utility candles.

#### VII. ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL VENTURES: PACKING, LABELING AND ELECTRONICAL COMPONENT ASSEMBLY

Due to the expected profitability of candles, two potential services were only cursorily assessed. If, due to unforeseen circumstances candles turn out to be an unviable venture, the Implementation Committee should more fully investigate these services.

The first and most realistic service is packing and labeling. Specifically, Mr. Grant, Deputy and Chemist of Dunbar's Agricultural Project, was quite interested in obtaining the services of clients to pack and put on pre-printed labels on all the government's processed fruit products. This could also be considered as an open employment possibility.



A longer term, but an innovative venture, would be electronics assembly. The director of a major computer business expressed interest in having blind and visually handicapped persons involved in intricate electronic assembly. He was even interested in adapting the worksite to suit the needs of the clients. However, at this time, the assembly seemed too complex for the clients' present level of skills.



## APPENDIX A



APPENDIX A

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Mr. Elijah Armstrong	Coordinator Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Energy and Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bulas	Director Chamber of Commerce
Derek Browne	National Development Foundation
Mrs. Thibou	Department of Tourism
Mr. Malcolm Edwards	President Rotary Int'l District #405
Ms. Tong	Director Partners of the Americas/ Antigua
Mr. Londell Benjamin	Treasurer, CCB
Mr. Grant	Dunbars Agricultural Project
Mr. Joseph Hughes	President Antigua Society for the Blind
Mrs. Samuels	Supervisor Antiguan Industrial Workshop for the Blind
Mr. R.K. Luke	Implementation Committee Antigua Society for the Blind
Mr. Al Mustardo	Production Manager VIA Technologies (Rochester, NY)
Mr. Adolph Veira	Veria Plastics St. Vincent
Mr. Sorenson	U.S. Ambassador to Antigua
Mr. Aubrey Webson	Executive Director Caribbean Council for the Blind

All clients, collectively and individually.



## APPENDIX B



COMPLETE LIST OF SUGGESTED REPAIRS  
AND PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Securing the Building:

- Repair right front picture window and its meshing
- Repair broken windows
- Secure doors
- Fire Extinguisher

Additional Improvements

- Raise front window display cases with bricks or blocks
- Use either existing furniture to make, or purchase a bench so clients will not sit outside blocking the entrance to the workshop
- "Open - Closed" sign and/or sign with business hours
- "No Smoking" sign
- Repair broken dividing wall and crack in wall
- Repair bathroom fixtures
- Paint building
- Clean off roof

Building's Surrounds:

- Pick-up litter and sweep walkway
- Basic gardening
- Trim bush which blocks the right picture window



## APPENDIX C



## APPENDIX C

### LIST OF SAMPLE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS CORRESPONDING WITH POSITIONS

- clerical duties - secretary .
- delivering accounting books to accountant - secretary
- special assignments and errands for clients - secretary and volunteers
- disbursing money - secretary and supervisor
- mobility Training - RFO
- assistance with daily living skills - RFO
- resolving problems with clients - RFO, supervisor, coordinator
- vocational assessments tests - RFO and supervisor
- training workers - RFO and supervisor
- identification and recruiting of new clients - RFO and supervisor
- adaptations to the worksite - RFO, supervisor, coordinator
- identifying problems in production - supervisor
- quality control - supervisor
- basic recordkeeping - supervisor
- sales - supervisor
- development of job descriptions - supervisor, coordinator, executive
- advertising and marketing - supervisor, volunteers
- employee relations - supervisor and coordinator
- raw materials procurement - supervisor and coordinator
- adaptations in product line - coordinator
- budget - coordinator
- negotiating with agencies and organizations - coordinator
- special projects and programs - coordinator and executive



APPENDIX D



INDUSTRIAL WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT MARCH 31, 1985

CAPITAL ACCOUNT

Excess of Income over Expenditure EC\$143,689.16

FIXED ASSETS

(3) 122,885.00

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash - Current Account Barclays 19,240.16

Accounts Receivables (Govt Antigua) 1,600.00

Inventory 1,028.00

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21,868.16

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CURRENT LIABILITIES

Social Security 458.00

Medical Benefit 287.00

S. Benjamin 319.00

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1,064.00

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WORKING CAPITAL

20,804.16

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NET ASSETS

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143,689.16

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INDUSTRIAL WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH, 1985

1. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

To seek for the employment and general advancement of blind persons: to work in collaboration with the Government of the State, the Caribbean Council for the Blind and any other agency in any part of the World for the general well being of blind persons.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

All amounts are expressed in Eastern Caribbean Dollars. Foreign currency assets and liabilities at the year end have been translated at the rates ruling at the Balance Sheet date.

3. FIXED ASSETS

Property - All Saints Road	EC\$120,000.00
Fans, Refrigerator & Sewing - Machine	2,885.00
	<hr/>
	122,885.00
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TREASURER'S COMMENTS  
INDUSTRIAL WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND

All fundings are derived from the Organization and Bank's records; the data were carefully categorised and scrutinised so that all previous transactions of the Organization could be analysed in conformity and consistency with generally accepted accounting principles.

In order to assess the general financial standing of the Organization, a Balance Sheet as at March 31, 1985 is prepared. It reflects the finding of the Treasurer as related to Capital Contribution and Creditor position.

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE: This amount of EC\$143,689.16 reflects the cumulative operating results of the Organization from April 1981 to March 1985 (48 months). The figure is derived after all other line items on the Balance Sheet were ascertained; a balancing amount was then plugged in. In the absence of four reliable Income Statements for each fiscal year, there was no alternative method.



APPENDIX E



APPENDIX E

BIMAP  
BARBADOS INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

BETTER MANAGEMENT FOR PROFITS  
A LOW COST PROGRAM FOR  
MEDIUM/SMALL ENTERPRISES

Better Management for Profits is a low-cost Assistance Program for medium and small enterprises in the small states of the English-speaking Caribbean.

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For further information you may write to the following:

Rudolph Gibbons  
Executive Trustee  
Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity  
Wilkey, St. Michael



BIMAP  
BARBADOS INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

"PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FOR PROFITS"  
A LOW COST PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISES

Are you satisfied with your company's performance?

When was the last time you asked yourself if your company could be doing better?

- . Could it be generating more profit?
- . Could it be providing a better service to customers, or more jobs to the community?
- . Could it be exporting more?

In these fast-changing times, perhaps you have been too busy to think objectively about such vital matters or maybe you have felt the need for some sound advice on excellence in performance.

The BIMAP/USAID Assistance Program can put you on the right track. It can help you in many ways.

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For further information you may write to the following:

Rudolph Gibbons  
Executive Trustee  
Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity  
Wilkey, St. Michael



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AN OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS  
OF SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT  
FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND  
....ANTIGUA. (198?)

	DATE DUE	
	REFERENCE	

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND  
15 WEST 16TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10011

